



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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EMS TRANSMISSION: 4/18/14
Instruction Memorandum No. CA-2014-015
Expires: 9/30/15

To: District Manager, All Field Managers
ATTN: District and Field Office Fire Management Officers

From: State Director

Subject: California BLM Policy for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Units

Program Area: Fire Management

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) updates and replaces the policy for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) use as originally directed in *Instruction Memorandum No. CA-2008-026*.

Policy/Action: In order to ensure compliance with the statewide policy for the use of SCBA's, a Notification of Policy Compliance letter from the District Manager is required to be sent to the State Director. This letter will confirm compliance with all the implementation procedures of the SCBA program. Documentation must be completed by June 15 annually.

All Districts must be compliant before SCBA's are put into service.

Timeframe: Effective immediately.

Budget Impact: None

Background: Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus units are used in most California wildland fire organizations. Their use provides additional protection to firefighters responding to fires threatening public lands that may have originated from vehicle fires, dump fires or structure fires. Increased occurrence of these types of fires has elevated the potential exposure to toxic smoke and gases at wildland fire incidents. It is California BLM policy that personnel not be exposed to a hazardous atmosphere without the available protection of SCBA's.

The California BLM fire management program has taken steps to provide protection to the firefighter by supplying positive pressure SCBA units for all Type 3 engines (class 665) within California. These SCBA units are the only approved units and are required to be available on all Type 3 engines.

Standards for SCBA use are found in the 2014 BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures Guide. The BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures and Training Course Guides are available from the District Fire Management Staffs and at Fire Stations. Districts must meet the standards for medical requirements, equipment, training, and clothing as established in the BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures Guide.

The California BLM policy for using SCBA units on structure fires will continue to be to preserve life and protect property. Our policy strictly prohibits entering structures for suppression efforts. We will continue to provide structure defense from the exterior only.

In compliance with the SCBA guide, the SCBA units on fires will be used according to the guide. The SCBA units must be worn throughout the extinguishment and mop-up phases of these incidents. To offer maximum safety to the firefighter during these types of fires, foam will be utilized at all times during extinguishment and mop-up. As a reminder, supervisors are responsible for grooming standards per sub-section 5 of the "Use of Respiratory Equipment" section. All engineering and management controls should be exercised prior to the use of SCBA's.

Our objective for providing the SCBA's is not to provide a new way for our firefighters to fight fires, but to provide protection from what they are already exposed to. Alternative tactical procedures should be considered before using SCBA equipment. Once the decision to utilize the SCBA equipment has been made, actions initiated should be based on the crew's level of training, capability and safety equipment.

If you have any questions or need additional copies of the guide and training manual, please contact Sam Marouk - Deputy State Fire Management Officer for Operations, at 916-978-4437.

Signed by:
Angie Lara
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:
Richard A. Erickson
Records Management